

# LETTERS - AND - ART

LITERATURE DRAMA MUSIC FINE-ARTS EDUCATION CULTURE

## THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL

THE TAJ MAHAL IN INDIA has always stood as the supreme gem of buildings; Washington now claims its rival in the Lincoln Memorial, dedicated by President Harding on May 30. The two buildings, devoted to memorial purposes, are similarly fortunate in their settings. Reduplicated in the water that forms their foreground, the sun by day and the moon by night conspire to enhance their beauty. Designed by the architect, Henry Bacon, the Lincoln Memorial, has "not an unnecessary line, not a fault in proportion. Line and mass

the Potomac and beyond rise the hills of Virginia. Nearby is Arlington, where lie the remains of the men who under Lincoln's leadership went down valiantly into death that the national destiny might be served. To the east, nearly a mile away, stands in its austere dignity Washington's Monument, which is to be connected with the Lincoln Memorial by a great lagoon that will reflect both monuments. A mile beyond the Washington Monument is the Capitol. These three—the Capitol, Washington's Monument and the Lincoln Memorial—form the three great features of the Mall, the plan of which provides for walks and drives and rows of elms for the entire distance. It is a composition without parallel in any other city in the world."

Such is the outer shell designed to enshrine the Statue of Lincoln, conceived by Daniel Chester French. The writer here quotes words of Mr. Bacon setting forth his conception of the Memorial:

"From the beginning of my study I believed that this Memorial of Abraham Lincoln should be composed of four features: A statue of the man, a memorial of his Gettysburg speech, a memorial of his second Inaugural Address, and a symbol of the Union of the United States, which he stated it was his paramount object to save and which he did save. Each feature is related to the others by means of its design and position, and each is so arranged that it becomes an integral part of the whole in order to attain a unity and simplicity in the appearance of the monument."

"The most important object is the statue of Lincoln, in which is expressed as far as possible the gentleness, power and intelligence of the man."

The site of the building is isolated and austere. It is converted from a malarial swamp, at first thought so impracticable that "Uncle Joe" Cannon declared that "the building would shake itself down with loneliness and age." But—

"A few months ago, when 'Uncle Joe' announced his intention of leaving Congress, the Lincoln Memorial was the one achievement in his fifty years of service in Congress to which he pointed with most pride."

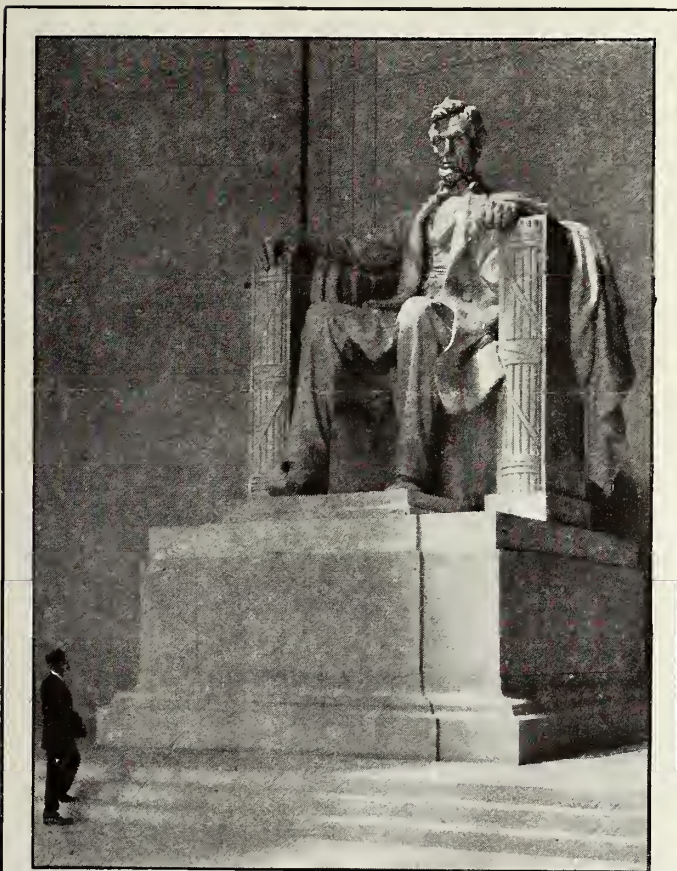
"If ever I come back to Washington," he said, "it won't be to wander up and down through the halls of the House of Representatives. You will find me walking down the Mall toward the Lincoln Memorial, or standing there, looking at the statue of the greatest man in American history."

John Hay is also quoted in judgment upon the site, tho in his case favorable from the first:

"Lincoln, of all Americans next to Washington, deserves this place of honor. Toil must not approach too close to the immortals. His monument should stand alone, remote from the common habitations of men, apart from the business and turmoil of the city—isolated, distinguished and serene. Of all the sites this one, near the Potomac, is most suited to the purpose."

In presenting the Lincoln Memorial to the nation, Chief Justice Taft referred to the fifty-seven years which have "faded the figures of Lincoln's contemporaries," leaving him to stand "grandly alone." Then:

"Here on the banks of the Potomac, the boundary between the two sections whose conflict made the burden, passion and triumph of his life, it is peculiarly appropriate that it should stand. Visible in its distant beauty from the Capitol, whose great dome typifies the Union which he saved, seen in all its grandeur from Arlington, where lie the nation's honored dead who fell in the conflict, Union and Confederate alike. It marks



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THE MAJESTIC LINCOLN.

Done by Daniel Chester French for the Memorial at Washington. The human figure at the left sets the scale for this 175-ton statue.

combine to make that for which idealists strive—the unity that is perfection." The sentences are written by Grace Phelps in the New York *Tribune*, where she sketches the grandiose plans that are designed to give Washington one of the most impressive beauty spots in this country:

"The Memorial stands in a great open space on a mound built of a series of terraces, rising to a total height above grade of 122 feet. A colonnade of great Doric columns of white marble surrounds the walls, within which, in the center space, is the colossal statue of Lincoln. Each column, thirty-six in all, represents a State, one for each State existing at the time of Lincoln's death. On the walls above the colonnade, supported at intervals by eagles, are forty-eight memorial festoons, one for each State existing at the present time."

"The setting of the Memorial is magnificent. Behind it flows



the restoration of the brotherly love of the two sections in this memorial of one who is as dear to the hearts of the South as to those of the North.

"Here is a shrine at which all can worship. Here an altar upon which the supreme sacrifice was made in the cause of liberty. Here a sacred religious refuge in which those who love country and love God can find inspiration and repose."

In accepting the gift the President said in part:

"Somehow my emotions incline me to speak simply as a reverent and grateful American rather than one in official responsibility. I am thus inclined because the true measure of Lincoln is in his place to-day in the heart of American citizenship, tho nearly half a century has passed since his colossal service and his martyrdom.

"In every moment of peril, in every hour of discouragement, whenever the clouds gather, there is the image of Lincoln to rivet our hopes and to renew our faith. Whenever there is a glow of triumph over national achievement there comes the reminder that but for Lincoln's heroic and unalterable faith in the Union these triumphs could not have been.

"No great character in all history has been more eulogized, no rugged figure more monumental, no likeness more portrayed. Painters and sculptors portray as they see, and no two see precisely alike. So, too, is there varied emphasis in the portraiture of words, but all are agreed about the rugged greatness and the surpassing tenderness and unfailing wisdom of this master martyr.

"History is concerned with the things accomplished. Biography deals with the methods and the individual attributes which led to accomplishment.

"The supreme chapter in history is not emancipation, tho that achievement would have exalted Lincoln throughout all the ages.

"The simple truth is that Lincoln, recognizing an established order, would have compromised with the slavery that existed, if he could have halted its extension. Hating human slavery as he did, he doubtless believed in its ultimate abolition through the developing conscience of the American people, but he would have been the last man in the Republic to resort to arms to effect its abolition. Emancipation was a means to the great end—maintained union and nationality. Here was the great purpose, here the towering hope, here the supreme faith. He treasured the inheritance handed down by the founding fathers, the ark of the covenant wrought through their heroic sacrifices, and builded in their inspired genius. The Union must be preserved. It was the central thought, the unalterable purpose, the unyielding intent, the foundation of faith. It was worth every sacrifice, justified every cost, steeled the heart to sanction every crimson tide of blood. . . .

"This memorial, matchless tribute that it is, is less for Abraham Lincoln than for those of us to-day, and for those who follow after. His surpassing compensation would have been in living, to have his ten thousand sorrows dissipated in the rejoicings of the succeeding half century. He loved 'his boys' in the army, and would have reveled in the great part they played in more than a half century of the pursuit of peace and concord restored.

"How he would have been exalted by the chorus of the Union after 'the mystic chords' were 'touched by the better angels of our nature'! How it would comfort his great soul to know that the States in the Southland join sincerely in honoring him, and have twice since his day joined, with all the fervor of his own great heart, in defending the flag. How it would soften his anguish to know that the South long since came to realize that a vain assassin robbed it of its most sincere and potent friend when it was prostrate and stricken, when Lincoln's sympathy and understanding would have helped to heal the wound and hide the scars and speed the restoration! How with his love of freedom and justice, this apostle of humanity would have found his sorrows tenfold repaid to see the hundred millions to whom he bequeathed reunion and nationality, giving of their sons and daughters and all their fortunes to halt the armed march of autocracy and preserve civilization, even as he preserved union! . . .

"To-day American gratitude, love and appreciation, give to Abraham Lincoln this long white temple, a Pantheon for him alone."

## ENGLISH TO BE SPOKEN BY THE FRENCH

**P**OLITENESS IS STILL A FRENCH VIRTUE. M. Maurice Donnay, academician and author, came to this country recently to represent, along with his colleague, M. André Chevrillon, France in the American celebrations of the Molière Tercentenary. He declared, just before leaving us, that his countrymen must learn English. His politeness withheld the recommendation that we learn French. It is supplied for



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VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT.

Showing the plan of Potomac Park with the Monument and the Memorial on opposite axes. The buildings on the right will eventually disappear.

him by the Boston *Transcript*, which finds this suggestion easily implicit in what he did say:

"'When one sets foot in America,' he declared, 'he is confounded by the fact that our country has not yet comprehended how indispensable it is to study the English language.' His own unfamiliarity with the native tongue of Shakespeare and Lincoln, he continues, resulted in a painful consciousness of inferiority at the public gatherings he attended in the United States. No longer must Frenchmen have any illusions with respect to the universality of the French language, however strong may be their belief in its merits. The French language, he points out, is no longer a 'second' tongue to civilized men the world over, and the undeniable fact that English is the speech of two-thirds of civilization makes it incumbent on all good Frenchmen to acquaint themselves with English. 'We must learn English,' he warns his countrymen. 'It is imperative and a patriotic necessity.'

"However wide may be the difference of opinion with respect to the destiny that awaits the English language, there can surely be no quarrel with M. Donnay on the score of the soundness of his advice. The more English studied in France the better. But the same logic applies as forcefully to the reverse side of the same proposition, altho M. Donnay with perfect propriety omitted to say so in so many words. If cultivated Frenchmen are handicapped in their understanding of Britain and America through ignorance of the common language spoken by the two countries, so also are Englishmen and Americans handicapped in understanding France if they have not a working knowledge of the French tongue. To the Greeks all non-Hellenes were barbarians, and in order to overcome the barrier to common understandings that arise when men speak a Babel of discordant tongues, the world's statesmen long ago agreed that French should be the language of diplomacy. An understanding of one or more foreign languages opens up new avenues of appreciation, whether that language be French, German, Italian, Russian, or any other, and few accomplishments are better calculated to break down national prejudices."

The get-together policy suggested in these opinions of mutual-